MC 585: The Christian Communicator: Preaching To A Shifting Culture
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte
Fall 2016
Oct. 5-7; Nov. 2-4

Instructors: Rodney L. Cooper, PhD and Derek Mondeau.
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Class Schedule: October 5-7 and November 2-4
12:00p.m. - 6:00p.m. October 5; 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m. October 6; 9:00a.m. - 12:00pm October 7
12:00p.m. - 6:00p.m. November 2; 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m. November 3; 9:00a.m. - 12:00pm November 4.
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

SAKAI

Course documents and other supporting materials can be accessed on SAKAI Learning Management System at https://sakai.gcts.edu. Students are to use their GCTS login information and password to access SAKAI. It is expected that students will utilize both the required textbook and SAKAI to gain an understanding of course content. Pre-work and readings are required prior to the first class and expected to be completed before the first class.

Course Description

This course is designed to equip InterVarsity staff to develop and deliver biblical messages that are a) faithful to the Scriptures b) faithful to their personhood and c) faithful to their audience - the university and community college context. Throughout the course, the aim will be to strike a balance between text and context: exegetical faithfulness to Scripture and homiletical faithfulness to campus culture. Through practices such as listening to sermons, engaging with reading assignments, writing reflection papers, and delivering sermons, students will become better exegetes of the Bible and better communicators of God’s Word. The course has also been developed with the assumption that students do not possess a mastery of Biblical Languages.

Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students will achieve the following outcomes:

1. Gain necessary skills to develop and deliver biblical sermons that are faithful to the Scripture and faithful to their hearers.
2. Demonstrate homiletically-informed exegesis of biblical texts.
3. Understand Big Idea as a philosophy of communication.
4. Comprehend the importance that their personhood (gender, ethnicity, tradition, background, family, etc.) plays in the act of preaching.
5. Better understanding of social context and the ways that diversity of ethnicity, gender and tradition shapes the hearing of God’s Word.
6. Enhanced awareness of the current University context and the pastoral and homiletical implications for their preaching.
7. Critical listening skills for critiquing their sermons, their peers’ sermons, and the sermons of well known preachers, and
Course Requirements:

Course Textbooks And Resources

Required:


Gardner Taylor, Beecher Lectures (Resources in Sakai)

Social Context Article Packet (Resources in Sakai)

MC 585 Sermon Recordings (Resources in Sakai)

Recommended:


Course Assignments and Grading

1. Attend all lectures and exercises. Students are expected to be on time for class. Late work will not be accepted. You will be expected to participate in all class discussions and exercises.

2. Class Readings. Students are expected to read all required texts and upload a no longer than 3 page report to SAKAI by the deadline indicated below.

   Biblical Preaching and Alone Together should be read before the class meets in October. Reports for both books much be uploaded no later than 09/28/2015.

   Gardner Taylor’s Beecher Lectures and Social Context Resource Packet should be read before the class meets in November. Reports for these selected readings much be uploaded no later than 10/30/2015.

   Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes must be read and report uploaded no later than 11/30/2015.

3. Sermon Listening Exercises. Students will listen to four Big Idea sermons by preachers from different social contexts and write a brief analysis of each to upload to SAKAI. Reports for all listening exercises must be uploaded to SAKAI by 11/30/2015.

4. Preach a 20 minute sermon without using notes. Sermons will be critiqued by both professor and peers for healthy feedback. The sermon will be preached during our November class session. The sermon will be evaluated based on the criteria below.

Criteria for Grading: Your Sermon Will Be Judged On The Following:

1. Content
   a. Is the sermon clear? Is there a clear exegetical idea: Is the sermon well organized? Does it flow easily? Does the audience understand you? (A good outline will assist with content.)
   b. Does the sermon have effective content? Is it based on sound exegesis? Does it have good supporting material and relevant illustrations?

2. Delivery
   a. Does your delivery sound as though you really want to communicate? Does your voice have variety? Are you enthusiastic?
   b. Does your body support what you are saying? Do you have eye contact that is direct and personal? Do you use gestures?
   c. Do you want to be heard? Do you demonstrate conviction and sincerity?

Questions to Consider When Listening to or Reading a Sermon

For the assignment: Write out each question followed by your response. Be specific and give examples for what is asked.

1. What do you think is the main idea or concept the preacher was trying to get across? Can you state it? Y/N Analyze and comment.

2. When through with the introduction, did you want the preacher to go on? Y/N Did it capture interest so that you would want him/her to continue? Y/N How did he/she do?
Analyze and comment.

3. Did he/she illustrate? Y/N If so, what did he/she do? — to explain, prove or apply? Did he/she succeed? Y/N Why or why not? Analyze and comment. Please provide specific examples of how the preacher explained, proved, or applied the text.

4. Do you think the conclusion drove home the main idea of the sermon in a way that caused you to want to respond? Analyze and comment.

5. What do you think that you as a listener might do, think or change as a result of hearing the sermon?

6. Do you think the delivery helped or hindered the presentation? What were its strengths? What about weaknesses? Analyze and comment.

7. Do you think that the sermon grew out of the biblical text? Or was it imposed on it?

Analysis and comments:

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to attend class, be on time, and not leave early unless absolutely necessary. Sloppy deportment (such as wearing of caps in the classroom, sleeping, reclining, eating loudly, and distracting behavior) is to be avoided. Respect for the professor and students is expected.

Examples of disrespect include lateness for class, talking as an aside to someone, even in quiet tones, whenever someone else is speaking as part of the classroom discussion, demeaning remarks towards others, and rudeness. These guidelines are not intended to curtail anyone’s freedom in an academic community, but to provide a wholesome atmosphere for learning as befits Christian leaders.

Course Administration

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for the class. Make every effort to be in class on time. If a difficulty arises, contact the professor.

Due Dates

No SAKAI or classroom assignments will be accepted after the due dates. If you have extenuating circumstances (personal illness, death in family, or similar occurrences), contact the professor. In such instances, the school’s Extension Policy may potentially go into effect (see Syllabus Addendum below).
SYLLABUS ADDENDUM

Academic Standards

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancellation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the end date for the semester as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required in this case. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the stated date. Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades

Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work

Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self-addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.
Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three prerequisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.